

BCP Coordinating Committee Meeting
November 24, 1997, 2pm
Municipal Building (City Hall)
Room 304, City Manager's Conference Room

Action Items

1. Authorize Secretary to sign amendments to five participation contracts relating to five participation certificates issued to Robert Brandes (BCP Application #'s 102, 103, 104, 105, and 106)
2. Authorize Secretary to sign a participation contract with Jester Limited Partnership (BCP Application #0024)
3. Authorize Secretary to sign a participation contract on behalf of Grandview Hills for karst mitigation, subject to the submittal and processing of a complete participation application
4. Discuss and approve authorization of Secretary to sign participation contracts
5. Approve the establishment of a Citizen's Advisory Committee to advise the Coordinating Committee on matters pertaining to the administration of the Balcones Canyonlands Plan
6. Approve the establishment of a Scientific Review Team to provide scientific expertise to the Coordinating Committee on matters pertaining to the administration of the Balcones Canyonlands Plan and provide for the appointment thereof
7. Discuss possibilities for an alternative fee structure for the participation process

Administrative Items

1. Approve ~~minutes~~ *minutes* from September 12, 1997 Coordinating Committee Meeting
Record of decision
2. Receive staff briefing on Proposed FY '98 Budget and Quarterly Report for FY '97
3. Receive staff update on public participation process
4. Receive staff update on status of land management plans

11/19/97 draft - subject to final approval by Coordinating Committee Secretary

11/19/97 DRAFT

**Proposal to Create a Citizen's Advisory Committee
and a Scientific Review Team for the Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan**

Background

The Balcones Canyonlands Plan (BCP) is a regional habitat conservation plan developed to assist Travis County landowners and participating jurisdictions with Endangered Species Act mitigation requirements. On May 2, 1996 a federal permit was issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, formally implementing the Balcones Canyonlands Plan. This federal permit is held jointly by the City of Austin and Travis County.

An interlocal agreement between the City of Austin and Travis County, executed on August 3, 1995, established the Balcones Canyonlands Plan Coordinating Committee, which oversees the policies and administration of the Balcones Plan. The Coordinating Committee is composed of two voting members, a member of the Austin City Council and a member of the Travis County Commissioners Court, with a representative from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife serving as a non-voting member. Article III, Section 3.4 of this interlocal authorizes the Coordinating Committee to create advisory committees to assist in the administration of the Balcones Plan.

Since the federal permit was issued, the BCP Coordinating Committee and its managing partners have focused on land acquisition strategies, developing and implementing a voluntary participation process, and drafting land management plans for the 23,000 acres of current land holdings. While citizen input has been welcomed and considered during this entire process, a Citizen's Advisory Committee, a Scientific Review Team, and Macrosite Management Teams are needed to promote greater involvement with the public and the scientific community.

BCP Citizen's Advisory Committee

The purpose of the BCP Citizen's Advisory Committee is to provide citizen representation from various community interests affected by the Balcones Canyonlands Plan. The scope of issues to be addressed by the advisory committee will not be limited, but the following are some suggested areas of focus:

- plan financing
- voluntary participation process
- land acquisition
- public access to preserve land
- public outreach

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Appointments to the Citizen's Advisory Committee will be made by the Balcones Canyonlands Coordinating Committee. Appointees will serve for one year terms, but may be reappointed for successive terms. The Citizen's Advisory Committee will be composed of the following slots:

- 2 landowner representatives
- 2 business/developer representatives
- 2 conservation representatives
- 2 recreation representatives
- 1 mediation/facilitation expert

BCP Scientific Review Team

In order to assist the Coordinating Committee in addressing habitat and species management issues requiring scientific expertise, a Scientific Review Team will be appointed by the Coordinating Committee, with assistance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The role of the Scientific Review Team will be to ensure that tract managers are taking adequate steps to protect viable populations of the permit species through protection, management, and enhancement of preserve habitats and monitoring of the permit species.

This team will facilitate coordination between the various entities that manage Balcones Canyonlands Preserve habitats, and conduct annual macrosite reviews in conjunction with macrosite management teams. Research data, monitoring results, and Management Handbook protocols will be peer reviewed by the Scientific Review Team. Other duties will include reviewing and approving annual land management plans, experimental access areas, infrastructure corridor policies, and annual reports, for final approval by the Coordinating Committee Secretary. Proposed modifications to land management plans should also be reviewed by this team, prior to submittal to the Coordinating Committee Secretary for approval.

The Scientific Review Team will be composed of members for the following slots:

•7 preserve manager representatives: 2 biologists from the City of Austin, 2 biologists from Travis County and 1 biologist from each of the managing partners (LCRA, The Nature Conservancy of Texas, and Travis Audubon Society)

- 1 biologist from the Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge
- 1 biologist from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
- 1 outside expert on Golden-cheeked Warblers
- 1 outside expert on Black-capped Vireos
- 1 outside expert on karst invertebrate species
- 1 outside expert on hydrogeology
- 1 outside expert on botany

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Preserve manager representatives to the Scientific Review Team will be appointed by their respective entities. Outside experts will be appointed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The initial chair will be the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Macrosite Management Teams

Land managers and other interested or affected parties in each of the seven macrosites will meet regularly to discuss macrosite issues and coordinate management efforts (see Tier II - A, Management Handbook, "Coordination with BCP Partners and Neighboring Landowners"). Macrosite teams will review and develop land management priorities for the macrosite as a unit, address issues of concern for the macrosite, and ensure that adequate coordination between tract managers is occurring. Recommendations for modifications to approved land management plans may be proposed or reviewed by these teams, but must be submitted to the Scientific Review Team, prior to approval by the Secretary.

The entity managing the largest proportion of land in an individual macrosite will serve as the initial facilitator for that macrosite team, though the task could be rotated to other preserve management agencies in the future. Every macrosite team will include representation from both permit holders, as well as the relevant managing partners and holders of individual Section 10(a) or Section 7 permits within the macrosite. Neighboring landowners, community organizations and interested user groups will be encouraged to participate in the meetings of these teams.